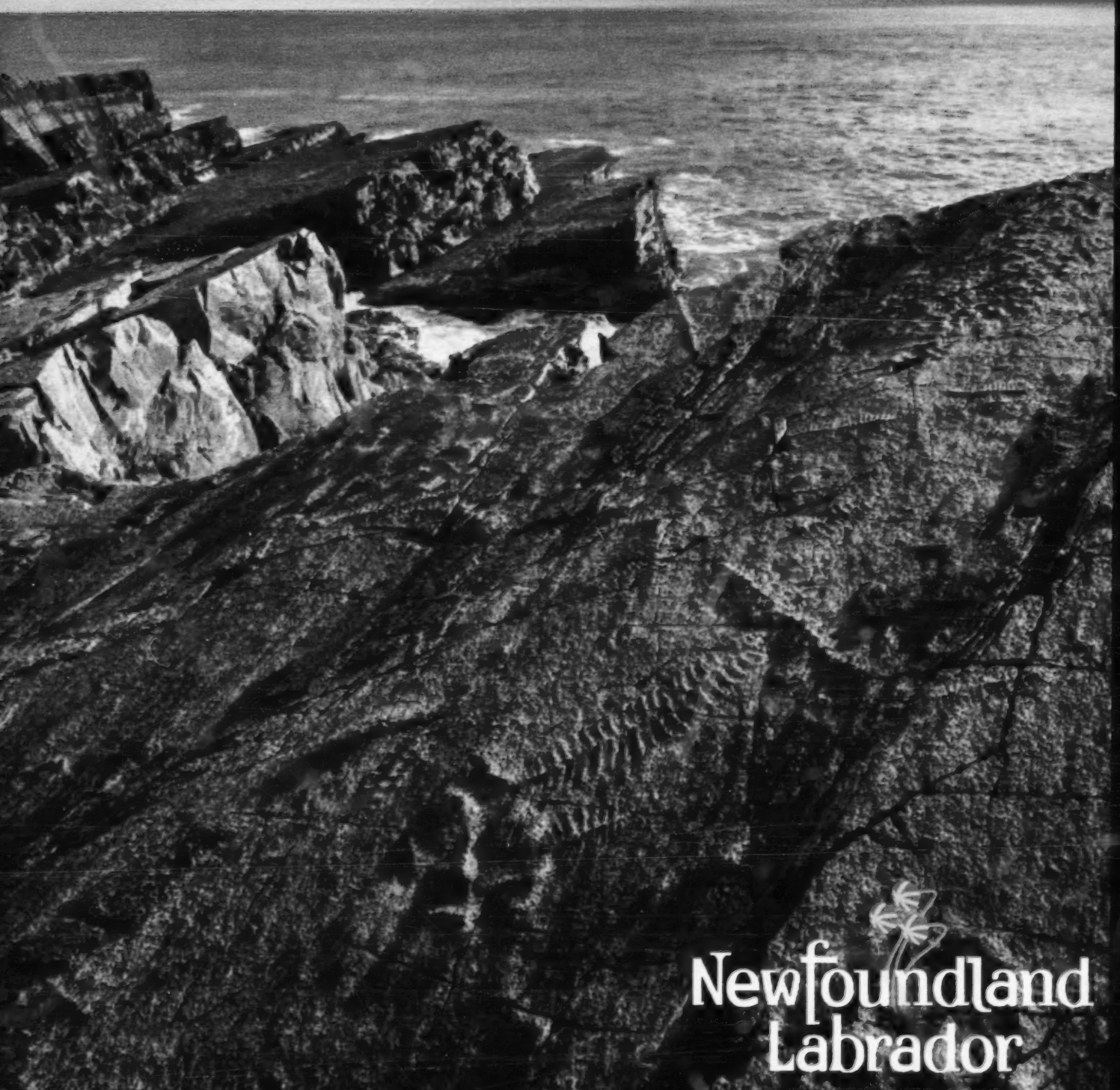
Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Environment & Conservation

2015-2016 Annual Report



Newfoundland Labrador

2016

For additional information, please contact:

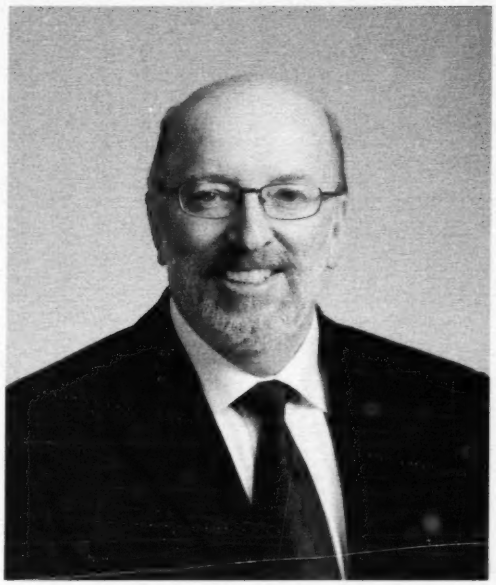
Policy and Planning Division
Department of Environment and Concervation
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Telephone: 709-729-2664 or 1-800-563-6181
Fax: 709-729-5818

Website: http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/

Cover photo is property of Parks and Natural Areas Division
Photo by Wayne Barrett

Message From the Minister



I am pleased to present the Department of Environment and Conservation 2015- 2016 Annual Report, submitted in accordance with its requirements as a category one entity under the *Transparency and Accountability Act.*

In its 2014-17 Strategic Plan, the department identified two strategic issues: environmental protection, and natural heritage. This annual report covers the second year of the three-year planning period and reports on the indicators and objectives for the 2015-16 fiscal year and progress on those initiatives.

This year the department continued to contribute to both preserving our natural heritage and protecting the environment. We worked with internal and external partners to reduce the number of boil water advisories in the province. We expanded the criteria for the Program for Hunters and Anglers with a Disability to be more inclusive. These are just two of the accomplishments outlined within this report.

As the Minister responsible, I am proud of the accomplishments of the department, which was integrated into the newly-formed Department of Environment and Climate Change on August 17, 2016. I look forward to building on the progress made to date on the important issues relating to the environment, natural heritage and climate change and anticipate further success going forward.

The outcomes reported reflect the department's commitment to these strategic issues. My signature is indicative of my accountability for the preparation of this report and I am accountable for the results contained within.

Hon. Perry Trimper
Minister

Table of Contents

Minister's Message	ii
Departmental Overview	1
Highlights and Accomplishments	4
Shared Commitments	10
Report on Performance	17
Opportunities and Challenges	25
Appendix A: Lines of Business	27
Appendix B: Financial Statements	31

Departmental Overview

The Department of Environment and Conservation (the department) is a Category 1 entity under the *Transparency and Accountability Act* and is responsible for the protection and enhancement of the environment, management of the province's wildlife, inland fish, water, and parks. The department is the lead on sustainable development initiatives and during 2015 -16 had shared responsibility with the Office of Climate Change Energy Efficiency (CCEE) for climate change adaptation. The department is comprised of two branches:

Environment Branch
This branch is responsible for the divisions of Environmental Assessment and Sustainable Development, Pollution Prevention, and Water Resources Management.

Natural Heritage Branch
This branch is responsible for the divisions of Parks and Natural Areas, Wildlife, and the Institute for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Science.

In addition to the above branches, the department has a Policy and Planning Division, and a communications unit.

Mandate
The mandate of the Department of Environment and Conservation is derived from the Department of Environment and Conservation Notice, 2008 under the *Executive Council Act* on matters related to:

- The protection, enhancement and conservation of the quality of the natural environment, including water, air and soil quality;
- Environmental assessment;
- The conservation, development, control, improvement and proper utilization of the water resources of the province;
- The management, preservation, control, protection and development of provincial parks, as defined in the *Provincial Parks Act*; provincial interests in all national parks established in the province by the Government of Canada; and wilderness and ecological reserves as defined in the *Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act*;
- The management and control of measures for the protection, preservation and propagation of wildlife, including inland fish;
- The assessment, development and establishment of sustainability indicators for the sustainable development of natural resources of the province; and
- The management, protection and preservation of endangered species as defined in the *Endangered Species Act.*

Departmental Overview

Vision

A clean, sustainable environment and healthy, resilient ecosystems in perpetuity for the social, physical, cultural, biological and economic well-being of the province.

Mission

By March 31, 2017, the Department of Environment and Conversation will have reduced the adverse impacts of human activities on the environment and improved the health of our ecosystems.

Lines of Business

The department is engaged in the following lines of business:

- Protection from pollution to air, soil and water;
- Coordination of environmental assessments and sustainable development ;
- Management of water resources, water quality, and availability;
- Provincial parks, ecological and wilderness reserves, natural areas, and Canadian Heritage Rivers;
- Management and protection of wildlife and inland fish populations; and,
- Climate change adaptation.

Please refer to Appendix A for a detailed overview of the department's current lines of business.

Reporting Entities

Under the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, a number of government entities also prepare strategic plans and annual reports. Entities which report to the Minister include:

- Multi-Materials Stewardship Board (MMSB);
- C.A. Pippy Park Commission (Pippy Park);
- Species Status Advisory Committee (SSAC); and,
- Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council (WERAC).

Legislation

The department's work is informed by the following Acts and their corresponding regulations:

- *Environmental Protection Act*
- *Water Resources Act*
- *Provincial Parks Act*
- *National Parks Lands Act*
- *Pippy Park Commission Act*
- *Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act*
- *Wild Life Act*
- *Endangered Species Act*

Service NL administers certain aspects of enforcement under the *Environmental Protection Act* and the *Water Resources Act*. The Department of Justice and Public Safety also administers select enforcement activities under the *Wild Life Act*, the *Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act*, and the *Endangered Species Act*. The Forestry and Agrifoods Agency administers select monitoring and wildlife removal activities under the *Wild Life Act*.

Departmental Overview

Location of Offices

The department's headquarters are in St. John's at the Confederation building (Executive and Environment Branch) and in Corner Brook (Natural Heritage Branch). The department has additional offices in St. John's, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, Corner Brook, Stephenville and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The department is also responsible for Salmonier Nature Park, 22 Provincial Parks, 10 Provincial Park Reserves, two Wilderness Reserves and 18 Ecological Reserves located throughout the province.

2015-16 Budget

The department's gross expenditure budget for 2015-16 was $28,165,300 with planned related revenue of approximately $2,937,100 for a net expenditure of $25,228,200. Please refer to Appendix B for a summary of expenditures and related revenue.

Staffing

During 2015-16 the department staffed 255 positons, which included permanent (148), temporary (13), seasonal (93) and contractual (1) employees. Fifty-nine per cent (150) of employees are male and 41 per cent (105) are female.

Avalon Peninsula	120
Central East	11
Central West	18
Labrador	9
West Coast/Northern Peninsula	97
Total Employees	255

Highlights and Accomplishments

Lawn Bay Ecological Reserve

As of April 13, 2015 the Lawn Bay Ecological Reserve changed from provisional to full status under the *Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act* and *Seabird Ecological Reserve Regulations*.

The Lawn Bay Ecological Reserve is located near the communities of Lawn and Lord's Cove on the Burin Peninsula. The reserve consists of four islands and a marine zone surrounding them; 370.7 of the 384.6 total hectares is marine. The reserve contains the only known North American breeding colony of Manx Shearwater, a nocturnal seabird. The reserve also provides nesting habitat for at least nine other seabird species: Leach's storm-petrels, herring gulls, great black-backed gulls, black guillemots, black-legged kittiwakes, common murres, razorbills, and both common and arctic terns.

Under the act, the Wilderness and Ecological Reserve Advisory Council held public consultations to gain input on establishment of the ecological reserve. As a result of the consultations, the reserve boundary was modified to exclude Offer Island and public feedback was incorporated into the reserve management plan.

The management plan and other information is available on the departmental website at: http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/parks/wer/

Photo credit: Kenneth Knowles

Highlights and Accomplishments

Program for Hunters and Anglers with a Disability

Expanded regulations for the Program for Hunters and Anglers with a Disability came into effect April 1, 2016. Eligibility for the program has been enhanced by broadening the definition of "hunter or angler with a disability", to include permanent disabilities or medical conditions that were not previously included in the *Wild Life Regulations*. These changes ensure that individuals who meet the newly defined eligibility criteria can participate to the degree possible in the recreational activities of hunting and angling regardless of their disability. Along with medical doctors and optometrists being able to confirm disability, this authority also now includes nurse practitioners.

Broadening eligibility for the program is in line with Access. *Inclusion. Equality - A Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities* (2012) and its action plan, released in June of 2015.

Photo by Judy Farnsworth

Highlights and Accomplishments

Labrador Caribou Initiative

All three sedentary woodland caribou herds in Labrador are listed as threatened under the provincial *Endangered Species Act* and the federal *Species at Risk Act*. The migratory George River Caribou Herd is not assessed for status under either Act, but declined from a population estimate of 775,000 in 1993 to approximately 10,200 animals in 2015 and is considered to be critically low.

The Labrador Caribou Initiative is a program of research and monitoring efforts for George River Caribou Herd aimed to document and understand the severity and causes of the decline in the Labrador Caribou numbers, to monitor the response of the herd to management actions, and to support long-term conservation and science-based management.

In 2015-16, a review of scientific evidence collected by the Wildlife Division under the Labrador Caribou Initiative was completed. The Wildlife Division collaborated extensively with the Quebec Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs in field activities and management planning and collaborated with staff and students of Caribou Ungava in George River caribou research. This included fall classification of the George River Caribou Herd; winter classification of the George River Caribou Herd and Lac Joseph Caribou Herd; and monitoring of collared wolves and black bears. Mortality investigations of collared caribou confirm continuing high levels of harvest despite the hunting closure initiated in 2013, contributing to the continuing decline of the herd. Although caribou populations across the north are known to undergo large population fluctuations, the severity of this decline, and the ongoing observations of declines in other migratory caribou herds are cause for great concern.

In 2015-16, consultations with Aboriginal governments and organizations regarding the continuance of a hunting ban were conducted. On March 23, 2016 the department announced hunting of the George River Caribou Herd will remain closed until March 31, 2017, with the closure beyond this period pending a further review of the herd status and health.

Highlights and Accomplishments

Environmental Assessment

In 2015-16, the Environmental Assessment (EA) Division conducted 49 screening reviews on proposed undertakings submitted for environmental assessment. While 37 of the undertakings were released subject to terms and conditions, seven undertakings underwent further assessment through the submission of Environmental Preview Reports (EPR), including the Indian River Cottage Lot Development, Long Pond Weir, Fermeuse Marine Offshore Supply Base, Howse Property Direct Shipping Ore Mine, Logy Bay Road NORM Temporary Storage Facility, Roy's Knob – Labrador City Quartzite Mine and the Eddies Cove Oil Detection Facility. Environmental Impact Statements were required for three undertakings proposing to establish soft shell clam farms located at Stephenville Crossing, Seal Cove and Piccadilly Bay. Some notable projects that were registered in 2015-16 and are currently undergoing EA screening review include the Placentia Bay Atlantic Salmon Aquaculture Project and the Bay d'Espoir to Western Avalon TL 267 Transmission Line.

Three key projects were released from EA with conditions: the St. Lawrence AGS Vein Fluorspar Mine, Wabush 3 Open Pit Mine project and the Wabush Mines Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan. The Big Triangle Pond Mineral Exploration Road is undergoing an appeal of the minister's decision. In 2015-16, there were 18 undertakings withdrawn or expired.

For a complete listing of EA projects please visit http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/env_assessment/index.html

Highlights and Accomplishments

Safe Drinking Water

The department continued the Operator Education, Training and Certification (OETC) Program. This program offers hands-on and formal training to operators of municipal potable drinking water systems. In 2015-16, hands-on training was provided to 243 participants through the use of the department's Mobile Training Units. Twenty four classroom-style formal education sessions were delivered to 266 attendees. The department also delivered the annual Clean and Safe Drinking Water Workshop. In 2015-16 the workshop had 259 participants and provided municipal operators with an opportunity to come together and increase their knowledge of drinking water safety.

As part of the workshop proceedings, Operator of the Year awards were presented to one operator and one volunteer operator to recognize their exceptional professionalism, dedication and outstanding contribution to providing clean and safe drinking water in their town or community. The 2015-16 Water Operator of the Year awards were presented to: Dale Walsh of Bay de Verde (Operator of the Year) and Harold Legge of No'kmaq Village (Flat Bay Band) (Volunteer Operator of the Year).

Highlights and Accomplishments

The Jordan Water Project

The project entitled *"Transboundary Water Governance and Climate Change in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan;"* funded by NATO's Science for Peace and Security Program was completed in November 2015. The department's staff collaborated with the Kingdom of Jordan to continue work on the advanced water monitoring and reporting network which includes real-time water and weather data collection stations. The data from this network will be available for use by various agencies to monitor water and climate changes on a real-time basis for strategic water bodies in the Kingdom of Jordan, namely the Jordan River and the Dead Sea.

Throughout the final stages of the project, additional emphasis was placed on analyzing the data collected from the network and reporting this information to users. A number of guidance manuals were developed outlining protocols and procedures to ensure the sustainability of the network infrastructure into the future. Additionally, preliminary earth observation work looking at the Dead Sea area was documented. In November 2015, a final workshop for interested stakeholders and partners was held in Jordan to summarize the project work, encourage collaboration and determine a path forward to approach water governance and climate change challenges in Jordan and surrounding countries.

This project successfully delivered on its objectives of capacity building among young Jordanian scientists and the transfer of knowledge from Canada to Jordan.

A project web page has been developed which hosts all project reports, manuals, station data, milestones and achievements: http://esystem.mutah.edu.jo/main/index.html

Highlights and Accomplishments

Proactive Disclosure

The Open Government Initiative is a government-wide effort aiming to improve access to eligible government information and data, enhance government's overall engagement of citizens and stakeholders and strengthen collaboration between and among all sectors including government. Open Information refers to the proactive release of government documents in a timely manner and in user-friendly formats. The objective of Open Information is to make more information available and improve its accessibility, organization and usability.

The department identified information, reports and datasets for public release through proactive disclosure. During the 2015-16 fiscal period the department released the following information / reports /datasets through the Open Government Initiative:

- Salmonier Nature Park 2014 Visitor Statistics;
- Water, Ecological and Park Permit Report (Sep 2015);
- Report on the Island of Newfoundland's Caribou;
- Permits, Approvals and Licenses;
    - Water Resources Management Regulatory Permits and Licences issued under the *Water Resources Act*, SNL 2002 c W-4.01;
    - Environmental Protection Regulatory Permits and Licences issued under the *Environmental Protection Act*, SNL 2002 c E-14.2;
    - Parks and Natural Areas Division Permit Report;
    - Lower Churchill Project Permits;
- Municipal Stewardship Agreements ;
- Institute for Biodiversity Ecosystem Science (IBES) grants (2008 -present);
- Big Game Draw Analysis (Moose and Caribou)

Improving access to this public information, including program and policy documents, archival materials, scientific data and financial and expenditure information, is an essential element of open government. Providing this information to the public leads to greater accountability and transparency.

Shared Commitments

Environmental concerns are often complex and multi-faceted, involving a number of different issues and stakeholders. To advance the department's mission of reducing the adverse impacts of human activities on the environment and improving the health of our ecosystems, it is important to work collaboratively with our partners and stakeholders. By working together on a variety of projects we ensure that the environment of Newfoundland and Labrador is protected.

The Moose Management Plan

The 2015-2020 Moose Management Plan (MMP) was supported by a five-year investment of more than $1.8 million through the 2015-16 budget. The MMP incorporates biological, social, and economic concerns into the framework for management planning. The MMP is delivered by the department in collaboration with an interdepartmental committee comprised of officials from the departments of Transportation and Works, Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development, Finance, and Justice and Public Safety, and the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency. The committee's mandate is to provide guidance and input to support the successful delivery, monitoring and evaluation of the plan. The five-year plan, developed to provide a framework for moose management in the province, and was released on April 6, 2015.

In 2015-16, the implementation of the MMP framework began. A key initiative are the Moose Reduction Zones (hunting areas designated adjacent to the Trans Canada Highway) are designed to test the efficacy of hunting as a mitigation tool to reduce moose-vehicle collisions. Research activities to evaluate the utility of the zones continued. Forty remote motion-sensitive cameras were deployed to record moose activity and four traffic counters were maintained in support of this initiative.

Moose continue to be important to our province, both culturally and economically. Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador are encouraged to be mindful and observant of moose when traveling on our province's highways.

To view the 2015-2020 Moose Management Plan, please visit: http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/moose_plan.pdf

Shared Commitments

Mistaken Point

The Mistaken Point Ecological Reserve is located southeast of Portugal Cove South on the southern tip of the Avalon Peninsula. The exquisitely preserved fossils found at the site are dated between 580 and 560 million years old, making them the oldest-known, large complex life forms found on Earth and a critical milestone in the history of life on the planet. The department worked in collaboration with the Department of Business, Tourism, Cultural and Rural Development, the federal government and local residents on the preparation of the nomination for designation of the Reserve under the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a World Heritage Site. The nomination is the culmination of remarkable work conducted over several years by staff and local volunteers.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) field mission to assess the nomination of Mistaken Point as a potential World Heritage Site occurred from September 27 - October 2 2015 in various locations in Trepassey, Portugal Cove South and the Mistaken Point Ecological Reserve. The IUCN evaluation panel met in November 2015 and sent a request for further information on five points of clarification. This information was submitted in February 2016 and completed the intensive two-year nomination process.

On July 18, 2016 Mistaken Point was inscribed as a World Heritage Site by the World Heritage Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Photo is the property of Parks And Natural Areas Division
Photo by Wayne Barrett

Shared Commitments

Species at Risk

As the department responsible for biodiversity, ENVC administers the *Endangered Species Act*. The Act established the Species Status Advisory Committee to conduct assessments on species of provincial concern. The Act also recognizes the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) as the assessment body for species of national concern.

In 2015-16, five existing committee members were reappointed, and three new members were added to the SSAC under the *Endangered Species Act*. In 2015-16 the department added six species at risk to the *Endangered Species Act:* Gmelin's Watercrowfoot, Griscom's Arnica, and Wooly Arnica as endangered, Tradescant's Aster, Blue Felt Lichen, and Water Pygmyweed. The Gray-Cheeked Thrush was removed from this list.

On March 31, 2016, the total number of species, subspecies and populations listed under the province's *Endangered Species Act* was 52, including: 24 endangered, 13 threatened and 15 vulnerable species. The department continues to review the species that have been recommended for listing by the Species Status Advisory Committee and the COSEWIC and will forward them for consideration by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

Natural Areas Establishment

The Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council (WERAC) is mandated by the *Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act*. WERAC advises the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, through the Minister of Environment and Conservation, on matters relating to the establishment, management and termination of wilderness and ecological reserves.

Throughout 2015-16 WERAC provided a range of advice and recommendations regarding the management and establishment of the province's wilderness and ecological reserves. This included public hearings held in Milltown-Bay d'Espoir on the proposed removal of land from the Bay du Nord Wilderness Reserve to allow the construction of transmission line 267.

The 11 members of the Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council were appointed by the Minister of Environment and Conservation for a three-year term on May 1, 2014.

Shared Commitments

Safe Drinking Water

In 2001, as part of the Multi-Barrier Strategic Action Plan (MBSAP) for Drinking Water Safety, a steering committee consisting of the deputy ministers of Environment and Conservation, the Department of Municipal Affairs, Health and Community Services and Service NL was appointed to oversee the implementation of the MBSAP. As the lead agency for the implementation of the drinking water safety plan, the steering committee is chaired by the deputy minister of Environment and Conservation. The committee meets on a regular basis to review progress and implementation of the MBSAP and other issues relating to drinking water safety.

The committee oversees the preparation and approves the release of the annual drinking water safety report which outlines progress for the reporting period and path forward for the next year. The steering committee is supported by an interdepartmental safe drinking water technical working group. The group is chaired by the director of the Water Resources Management Division and includes technical representatives of Health and Community Services (Director of Community Health), Municipal Affairs (Director of Municipal Infrastructure), Service NL (Director of Regional Services and Manager of Environmental Health), director of Public Health Lab and Chief Medical Officer of Health. The technical working group reports to the steering committee. The latest annual report can be viewed at:

http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/waterres/reports/drinking_water/annual_report_2015.pdf

In 2015-16, the Minister was tasked with developing a water quality action plan. To advance this goal, the department collaborated with the Department of Municipal Affairs to advance initiatives announced in 2015-16 budget to address drinking water quality issues faced by small and rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. The first initiative was to reduce the total number of boil water advisories. Standard operating procedures (SOP) were developed for each boil water advisory reason code. Beginning in 2016-17 these SOPs will be implemented for the removal of long-term boil water advisories. The final report is available at:

http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/waterres/quality/drinkingwater/sopbwa.html

The second initiative was to implement a three-year government commitment to municipal operating grants at the level of $22 million annually, and funding for a pilot project for regional water and wastewater operators. The sharing of regional water operators covers a cluster of four to five communities within each of the three regions with historic water quality, operation and maintenance issues. Funding was provided by Municipal Affairs under the Community Sustainability Partnership announced on April 29, 2015 and an operator was hired in each of the Eastern, Central and Western Regional Service Boards to assist communities within their regions to maintain and operate their water systems.

Shared Commitments

Climate Change Adaptation

The Office of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (CCEE) was responsible for strategy and policy development on climate change and energy efficiency in 2015-16. The department worked collaboratively with CCEE to implement action on climate change as put forward in the 2011 Climate Change Action Plan, *'Charting Our Course'*. The department also engaged in collaborative efforts in climate change adaptation such as the work of the Atlantic Regional Adaptation Collaborative; and Atlantic Climate Adaptation Solutions Association (ACASA).

In 2015-16 the department released the Town of Portugal Cove-St. Philip's Flood Risk Mapping Study. This study is an update to the flood risk study done in 1996 and includes all the rivers within the municipal boundary. Throughout the study municipal officials were consulted and provided valuable data, information and guidance. The study is available at: http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/waterres/flooding/frm.html

A Waterford Valley Flood Risk Mapping Study was initiated in November 2015. The study encompasses several communities situated alongside the Waterford River and its headwaters, such as, the Town of Paradise, the City of Mount Pearl, and the City of St. John's. The project is anticipated to be completed in March 2017

A second component of the department's climate change adaptation work is the Hurricane Season Flood Alert System. The alert system is based on forecasted precipitation amounts and seeks to provide communities with flood warning services as a key climate change adaptation and public safety tool. Alerts are provided to 46 communities that have flood risk mapping studies or have published intensity-duration-frequency curves from which precipitation based flood triggers can be derived. The Water Resources Management Division correlates the alerts from AMEC Environment & Infrastructure with water flow rates in the province's river systems. This information is sent to Fire and Emergency Services NL who then alert the affected communities and coordinate responses.

The Hurricane Season Flood Alert System serves to help communities prepare for storms and avoid future high-cost expenditures in repairs and damages. The system is operational during the peak hurricane months of June to December. In 2015, 9844 precipitation forecasts were generated and 70 alerts were issued to 29 communities.

Shared Commitments

Environmental Protection Activities

The department works with Government Service Centres, the Department of Municipal Affairs, and the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board (MMSB) to advance the Provincial Solid Waste Management Strategy. The department and Service NL have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to administer environmental protection activities through the Government Service Centres. This work includes inspection of waste disposal sites, petroleum storage tank systems, dry cleaners, saw mills, quarries, used tire facilities, used oil facilities, storage facilities for polychlorinated biphenyls, farm waste management facilities, soil treatment facilities and illegal dumping.

The department works with GSCs and the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency to issue approvals and enforce associated conditions related to waste management issues in the agricultural industry. Environmental health services are provided under an MOU with Service NL relating to agricultural operations.

Through the National Air Pollution Surveillance (NAPS) program the department operates a MOU with Environment Canada to conduct ambient air monitoring. Under this cost shared arrangement the province operates six air monitoring stations located throughout the province and federal government pays for the monitoring equipment at these stations. The department also has a Memorandum of Agreement with the Pest Management Regulatory Agency with Health Canada to carry out inspections under their Pesticides Compliance Program.

The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) is the primary minister-led intergovernmental forum for collective action on environmental issues of national and international concern. The council seeks to achieve positive environmental results, focusing on issues that are Canada-wide in scope and require collective attention by a number of governments. The department participates on the CCME through the Committee of Ministers, the Deputy Minister's Committee, the Environmental Planning and Protection Committee and membership in a number of working groups.

The CCME's strategic priorities are:

- Facilitate interjurisdictional cooperation on climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- Develop and implement the Air Quality Management System;
- Implement a vision for water to ensure that Canadians have access to clean, safe and sufficient water to meet their needs in ways that also maintain the integrity of ecosystems;
- Develop tools, data and best practices to help reduce and recycle waste; and,
- Increase jurisdictional capacity to manage contaminated sites.

Report on Performance

The Department of Environment and Conservation's 2014-2017 Strategic Plan identified two strategic issues that would guide the department's work for the three-year period from April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2017. These strategic issues are Natural Heritage and Environmental Protection .

Issue One: Natural Heritage

The natural heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador is of great importance to the people of the province and its conservation is an essential component of the department's mandate. Our natural heritage represents the province's wildlife, plants, ecosystems and landscapes. The mandate of Natural Heritage Branch includes the protection of large wilderness areas, representative areas of all provincial eco-regions, and areas that contain rare natural phenomena in order to conserve the diversity and distinctiveness of the province's rich natural heritage and to support an ecologically sustainable future for the benefit of present and future generations.

Effective wildlife management is based in large part on research and monitoring. By studying wildlife interactions, distributions, populations and habitat use, biologists are able to make informed recommendations for wildlife management approaches. An essential component of effective wildlife management is monitoring populations after a strategy has been implemented. This allows managers to measure the impact of the management strategy in order to determine whether the desired outcome was attained. Many research projects include a field component designed to collect data on wildlife populations. The results are used by managers to make recommendations within the Wildlife Division, as well as to other provincial and federal government agencies. Departmental research targets population dynamics and habitat modeling for big game (caribou, moose and black bear) and fur bearers, and the interactions between these species and their habitats.

The combination of protection, research and management supports government's objective of environmental sustainability, and enhanced management of our province's natural environment. It also addresses the focus areas of parks and natural areas, and wildlife management.

Goal: By March 31, 2017 the Department of Environment and Conservation will have enhanced management of natural heritage in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Objective: By March 31, 2016 the Department of Environment and Conservation will have commenced monitoring to track progress toward stewardship of Newfoundland and Labrador's natural heritage.

Measure: Commenced monitoring to track progress toward stewardship of Newfoundland and Labrador's natural heritage.

Report on Performance

Indicators	Results in 2015-16
Completed annual surveys of big and small game populations.	• Annual Surveys completed on the island of Newfoundland in 2015-16 include: Fall caribou classifications, one moose management area census, and one census of the South Coast caribou herds. • Surveys completed in Labrador in 2015-16 include winter and fall classification of the George River Caribou Herd, winter classification of Lac Joseph Caribou Herd, monitoring of five collared wolves and seven black bears for home range size and eventual landscape density estimate. • Groundwork was initiated for a hare monitoring survey to begin in the Fall 2017.
Continued implementation and monitoring efforts to support the Moose Management Plan	• The department continued to implement research activities in support of the Moose Reduction Zones. Forty camera traps and four traffic counters have been maintained to collect data on moose activity and traffic volumes. This has helped monitoring efforts. • Consultations between the Department of Transportation and Works and the Department of Finance, geared to obtaining information on traffic speed and moose vehicle collisions on the island were initiated and are ongoing. • An MSc student has completed their thesis on moose and moose vehicle collisions in the province. • Sufficient data was collected in 2015-16 is to support evaluation of the relationship between moose and their habitat on the island. Findings from this research will be incorporated into the MMP to develop mitigative measures for moose vehicle collisions

Report on Performance

Indicators	Results in 2015-16
Continued to work with external stakeholders to advance and manage wetland stewardship agreements, wilderness and ecological reserves as well as species at risk	• During 2015-2016 the department signed three wetland stewardship agreements with the town councils of Portugal Cove-St. Phillips, Bauline and Torbay. The Torbay stewardship agreement expands the existing protected wetlands habitat by 1250 acres. • The department continued to work with 36 municipalities that have signed similar agreements seeking to engage residents in conservation and habitat enhancement activities. These agreements cover more than 15378 hectares of wildlife habitat within municipal planning boundaries. • In 2015-16 the department listed six species at risk under the *Endangered Species Act* and removed one. For a list of these species see the SSAC Annual Report, available at http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/publications/wildlife/index.html#annual
Advanced the Mistaken Point Ecological Reserve World Heritage Site nomination dossier with the completion of the IUCN field mission and the provision of information to the World Heritage Centre.	• The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) field mission was held from September 27, 2015 to October 2, 2015 and included Trepassey, Portugal Cove South and Mistaken Point Ecological Reserve. • The IUCN evaluation panel met in November 2015 and requested clarification on a few technical points in the dossier, which was provided by the department. On July 18,2016 Mistaken Point was inscribed as a World Heritage Site by the World Heritage Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
Completed the transfer of the administration and control of provincial Crown land to Canada for the purpose of establishing the Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve	• Land transfer agreement signed July 31, 2015. • Transfer of administration and control document was signed by the Province in March 2016. • Assignment of provincial licenses and lease document was signed by the Provincial Government in March 2016 and is awaiting federal signature.

Discussion of Results

Natural Heritage

Throughout 2015-16 the department has completed our objectives for Natural Heritage Branch. The department has successfully commenced monitoring activity that will help track our progress toward stewardship of the province's natural heritage. Monitoring occurred on both big and small game populations. Monitoring commenced for the Moose Management Plan, which will ensure that the plan is informed by current data. Wetland stewardship and species at risk work progressed in collaboration with external stakeholders. The Mistaken Point Ecological Reserve nomination progressed and achieved milestones throughout 2015-16 and on July 18, 2016 Mistaken Point was inscribed as a World Heritage Site by the World Heritage Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. All provincial responsibilities towards finalization of the Crown land transfer to support the establishment of the Mealy Mountain Park Reserve completed. The Federal Government is working toward finalizing their responsibilities. The completion of the land transfer is anticipated in 2016.

2016-2017 Objective

By March 31, 2017 the Department of Environment and Climate Change will have continued to implement improvements to enhance the protection of the province's natural heritage.

Measure

Continued to implement improvements to enhance the protection of the province's natural heritage.

Indicators

- Continued implementation and monitoring efforts to support the Moose Management Plan;
- Initiated development of a provincial wetlands strategy;
- Investigated new methods for big game population monitoring;
- Finalized and publicly released a Natural Areas System Plan.

Issue Two: Environmental Protection

The Department of Environment and Conservation has the responsibility to protect and mitigate human impacts upon the environment of the province. The department has achieved this by leading key initiatives and strategic approaches that helped preserve, protect and improve the quality of land, air and water in the province. Throughout 2015-16 the department enhanced efforts to improve environmental stewardship and sustainable development through our work with partners, both internal and external. The department provided environmental stewardship for the province in the way it initiated changes to current regimes and practices, through adoption of the latest scientific, evidence-based approaches to managing the land, air and water. At the same time, the department continued to do the work it had previously undertaken, which ensured continuity in its management role in accordance with the strategic direction of environmental sustainability and addressed the focus areas of water and air quality, and remediation of impacted sites.

Goal: By March 31, 2017 the Department of Environment and Conservation will have enhanced efforts to improve environmental stewardship and environmental sustainability.

Objective: By March 31, 2016 the Department of Environment and Conservation will have continued to build upon its leadership efforts and collaboration in the areas of impacted sites and water quality.

Measure: Continued to build upon its leadership efforts and collaboration in the areas of impacted sites and water quality.

Report on Performance

Indicator	Results in 2015-16
Collaborated with the Department of Municipal Affairs to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to address long term boil water advisories	• The department worked together with the Department of Municipal Affairs to develop SOPs for all boil water advisories. The final report was released to the public and can be viewed at http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/waterres/quality/drinkingwater/pdf/sopbwafiles/FR_BWA_030916Rev.pdf
Partnered with the Department of Municipal Affairs to build capacity in selected Regional Service Boards and small communities for improved operation and maintenance of water supplies.	• The department delivered an annual water operator training and education workshop, "Operator Education, Training and Certification Program" In 2015-16 the workshop had 259 participants and provided municipal operators with an opportunity to come together and increase their knowledge of drinking water safety. • The department collaborated with the Department of Municipal Affairs to assist Regional Service Boards in hiring three regional operators serving the eastern, central and western regions. • The department assisted with recruitment of the Regional Water System Operators and the selection of the participating communities. In addition, ENVC provided a two day intensive hands-on training session to the regional operators, and continued to assist through the provision of technical advice where necessary • The addition of these operators increased capacity for both the operation and maintenance of the 54 water supply systems within these three regions.
Continued remediation of impacts at Hopedale and engaged in public meeting.	• The second phase of site remediation at the former military site in Hopedale continued. The department oversaw contractual work completing year two of a three year contract for the cleanup of the former military radar site. • In 2015-16 polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) and metals impacted soil at the former radar site were remediated at a cost of approximately $1.4 million. • One public meeting was held on July 13, 2015. The department met with the public and agreed to continue to pursue strategies for the Hopedale site.

Indicator	Results in 2015-16
Continued implementation of the Impacted Sites Liability Assessment Program (ISLAP) process and further formalized the Department's operational structure to address impacted sites	• Research and compilation of all information regarding provincial impacted sites was completed during 2015-16 under the ISLAP program. The program identified 185 potentially impacted sites were identified, 11 of which were classified as environmental liabilities under the PS3260 accounting standard. • Estimates of liability were produced by the department's Pollution Prevention Division for each site. This information was provided to the Office of the Comptroller General (Public Accounts). • Throughout 2015-16 the department updated and maintained the information collected by the ISLAP program.
Continued participation in Atlantic Partnership in Risk-Based Corrective Action Implementation (Atlantic PIRI).	• The Impacted Sites Management Section (ISMS) Environmental Engineer participated in Atlantic PIRI monthly teleconference calls, monthly regulator scrums (with other Atlantic Provincial regulators), and attended three meetings (Halifax, Charlottetown, and St. John's). • In 2015-16 the department contributed to Atlantic PIRI projects including: Updating soil vapour guidance, development of chlorinated solvents guidance, assessment of third party notification, implementation of methanol field preservation protocol (in line with Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment policy). These projects have or will produce technical and regulatory guidance that may be adopted by the Province within the Management of Impacted Sites process.

Report on Performance

Discussion of Results

Environmental Protection

In 2015-16 the department successfully continued to take a leadership role in the protection of our environment, through activities concerning water quality, air quality, and remediation of impacted sites.

The department in partnership with the Department of Municipal Affairs made progress in protecting our water quality by addressing long term boil orders with the development of standard operating procedures, and assisting three regional service boards in the hiring of regional operators for water supply systems. The use of these procedures is anticipated to lead to an increase in water quality throughout the province. The annual water operator conference also builds capacity of operators and communities to improve and properly maintain systems. The department continued progress in the remediation of impacted sites in the province and continues to be involved with Atlantic PIRI.

Budget 2016 created a need to increase efficacy and reduce costs. With this in mind the department had to forgo further formalizing the department's operational structure to address impacted sites, as the formalization would have incurred increased cost. Dedicated staff for addressing impacted sites are still in place however the operation structure has not be formalized at this time.

2016-17 Objective

By March 31, 2017 Department of Environment and Climate Change will have enhanced its efforts in the environmental protection of land, air and water in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Measure

Enhanced efforts in the environmental protection of land, air and water in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Indicators

- Explored options to modernize and update the environmental assessment process.
- Worked with the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment on the development of new Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards to improve the air quality across the country.
- Continued heavy metal and PCB remediation work in Hopedale.
- Educated water treatment and distribution operators though drinking water safety workshops, training and certification sessions.
- Implemented standard operating procedures to remove long term boil water advisories in at least five communities.
- Developed a water quality action plan.

Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

The Department of Environment and Conservation and the office of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency were combined into the Department of Environment and Climate Change in August 2016. The new department will be able to capitalize on the synergy created by the integration of these entities. There is opportunity for productive collaboration building on the accomplishments to date on important issues relating to environmental protection, natural heritage and climate change to generate strong solutions for sustainability.

The Department of Environment and Climate Change will continue to play a leadership role in environmental stewardship ensuring appropriate consideration is given to the areas of economic growth, ecosystem health and cultural resilience. It is important to demonstrate leadership in regards to innovative policies and programs which exemplify environmental stewardship and responsibility for our province's land, air, and water resources.

The department is committed to working with individuals, groups, communities and businesses that are dedicated to the protection of our natural areas and to the development of our resources in an environmentally sustainable manner. Partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, including municipal and federal governments, have a capacity to mobilize and realize improvements in pollution prevention, water resource management, and protection of our parks and natural heritage. Success and prosperity rests in our ability to work together.

In the mandate letter to the Honorable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Federal Government committed to increasing their partnership with provinces. The letter outlines that the federal and provincial governments will work together on a number of environment and climate change concerns. This will provide an opportunity for collaboration that will support both governments to fulfill their mandates. This spirit of collaboration was echoed in the Provincial Government Speech from the Throne in March 2016, outlining how this strong relationship, based on open dialogue, will serve our province well.

It is critical that we exemplify our commitment and capacity to lead by example. Thus the department has both an opportunity and a duty to explore innovative and creative solutions, adopt best practices and set standards in relation to environmentally conscious and climate-sensitive policies, practices and procurement.

The department has a strong tradition of communications with public stakeholders in particular as it relates to environmental assessment. With technological advances and changes in public expectations the department has a unique opportunity to use social media, and other technological tools to engage with citizens and stakeholders on the issues that matter.

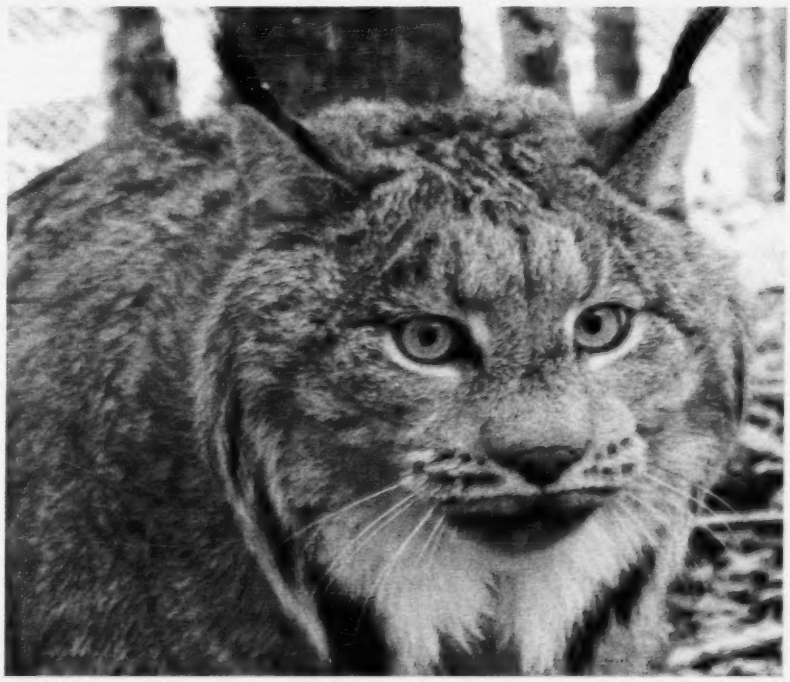
Opportunities and Challenges

Challenges

Environment and climate change issues are challenging in terms of their scale and interconnectedness. The department recognizes that the extreme complexity often transcends the province's jurisdiction. While these realities do represent challenges, the department will actively work towards achieving our mission through initiatives that are within our sphere of control. This includes creative policies, appropriate regulations, scientific monitoring, and dialogue with stakeholders.

Communication, awareness building, and the resourcing of existing and emergent priority areas while balancing economic development and environmental health will remain ongoing challenges for the department. Similarly, articulating and demonstrating how the department's policies and programs and commitment to supporting development that is sustainable and contributes to the future prosperity and quality of life for our residents and communities will remain an ongoing challenge.

As industrial projects are initiated and proceed through the various phases of development, it is critical that the Provincial Government ensure that environmental safeguards and protections are in place. The department will continue to work with our varied stakeholders to ensure their interests are considered while pursuing the goals of government.



Appendix A - Lines of Business

Protection of air and soil

The department is responsible for prevention of pollution of the province's air, water and soil ecosystems. Responsibilities include:

- preparing and issuing Certificates of Approval and licenses for:
  - industrial operations;
  - waste management systems (in collaboration with Service NL);
  - waste dangerous goods transporters;
  - pesticide vendors, operators and applicators; and,
  - heating oil storage tank inspectors;
- developing policies, guidelines, protocols, and regulations;
- developing training material and providing training;
- enforcing Certificates of Approval, license conditions and legislation through:
  - inspections, other than those done by Service NL;
  - the development of environmental monitoring programs in collaboration with industry;
  - audits of the environmental monitoring programs;
  - audits of environmental laboratories, and,
  - the monitoring of criteria air contaminants;
- designating impacted sites and auditing risk assessments based on environmental site assessments;
- managing remediation of industrial and military impacted sites that are the responsibility of government; and,
- maintaining a registry of impacted sites.

Coordination of environmental assessments and sustainable development

The department coordinates the provincial environmental assessment process for new development, which includes:

- reviewing proposed undertakings;
- gathering background information concerning the environmental impacts of the proposals;
- analyzing information according to a well-defined set of environmental assessment procedures;
- evaluating the contribution of proposed undertakings to the sustainable development of provincial resources
- providing recommendations to the minister as to whether a project can proceed in an environmentally-acceptable manner;
- conducting select surveillance on projects released from the environmental assessment process;
- development of public education and outreach information related to sustainable development; and,
- general promotion of sustainable development within Government and the larger community.

Management of water resources, water quality, and availability

The department ensures that the province's water resources are protected, conserved and enhanced to provide the greatest possible sustainable benefits to the province. Responsibilities include:

- designation of protected water supply areas and protected wellheads;
- monitoring and analysis of chemical water quality of community water supplies;
- issuance of well driller licenses;
- inspection of water well structures in accordance with requirements of the *Well Drilling Regulations*;
- comprehensive training for municipal water operators of community water and wastewater systems;
- hydrologic modeling;
- investigation of water-related problems and complaints;
- overseeing inspections of dams;
- granting of water rights;
- maintenance of a water rights registry;
- issuance of permits for community water and sewage systems, extensions and alterations;
- monitoring and inspection of community water and wastewater systems;
- provision of technical assistance on community water and sewage, hydrology, hydraulics, and environmental design of water related structures;
- maintenance of various online water quality and quantity databases and GIS resources;
- conducting studies on groundwater resources, flooding, water resource impacts and water use;
- flood risk mapping; and
- hurricane alerts.

Provincial parks, ecological and wilderness reserves, natural areas, and Canadian Heritage rivers

The department ensures that the province's ecoregions, wilderness, and natural features are preserved in protected areas to conserve natural heritage for the experience of current and future generations. The department is responsible for:

- the management and administration of provincial parks (the Newfoundland T'Railway Provincial Park is jointly managed by a special T'Railway Council) under the *Provincial Parks Act*;
- designation and management of wilderness and ecological reserves under the *Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act*;
- development and implementation of biodiversity monitoring programs and maintenance of ecological integrity in protected areas;
- development and implementation of environmental education programs within select wilderness/ ecological reserves;
- implementation of protection measures for Canadian Heritage Rivers in the province;
- negotiation of the land transfer to the federal government for National Parks; and,
- issuance of various permits for provincial parks, ecological and wilderness reserves.

Management and protection of wildlife and inland fish populations

The department protects, manages and conserves the province's biodiversity, wildlife resources and wildlife habitat. This includes:

- determining the status of species in the province according to the National Accord for the Conservation of Species at Risk to which the province is a signatory;
- developing and implementing stewardship agreements to support the recovery of species at risk;
- identifying, designating and developing recovery strategies for species at risk according to the *Endangered Species Act*;
- developing and implementing strategies for the conservation of biodiversity;
- designating and managing wildlife areas;
- administering Salmonier Nature Park - a wildlife rehabilitation, interpretation and research facility;
- developing management plans for consumptive species which are then published in the annual hunting and trapping guide;
- issuing hunting and trapping licenses;
- developing policies and guidelines regarding wildlife utilization;
- issuing Newfoundland and Labrador guide licenses;
- providing education, awareness and training programs such as firearm safety, hunter and trapper education courses;
- implementing the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, including providing assistance in the development of agreements to support wetland and coastal stewardship initiatives;
- developing long term landscape level planning to minimize conflicts between wildlife and other land uses;
- permitting for the non-consumptive use, possession, importation and export of wildlife and parts thereof;
- collecting scientific information to provide input into the sustainable management of wildlife, including inland fish populations, and habitat;
- utilizing education, awareness and stewardship programs and initiatives to foster appropriate attitudes, respect, behavior and appreciation towards our wildlife and habitat; and
- development and coordination of graduate research projects through the Institute of Biodiversity, Ecosystem Science (IBES).

Climate Change Adaptation

The department works in collaboration with the Office of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency in responding to climate change. The department is responsible for:

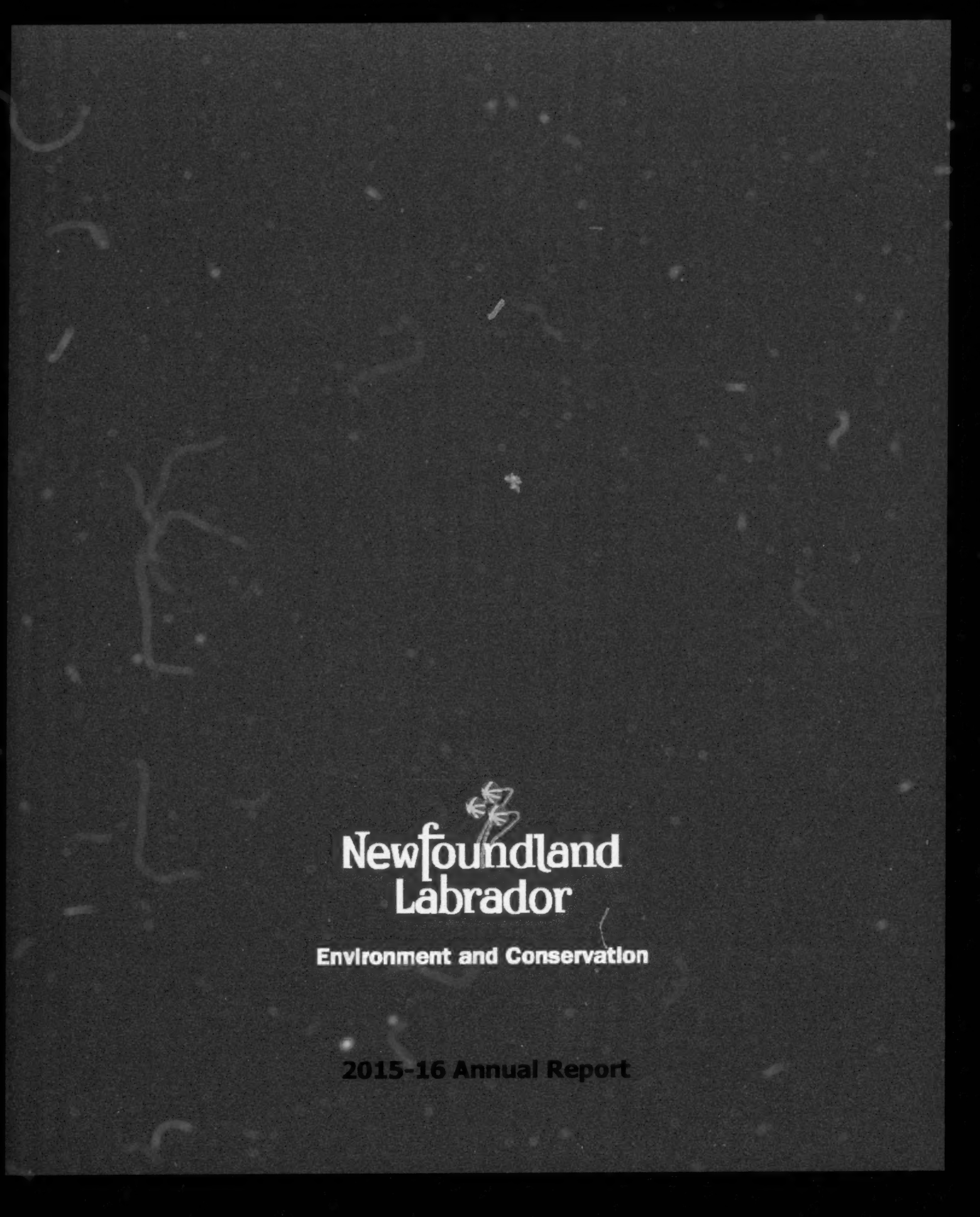
- implementation of some elements of the provincial Climate Change Action Plan; Atlantic Climate Adaptation Solutions (ACASA) Program;
- administration of the Regional Adaptation Collaboratives; and,
- creation of stakeholder awareness on greenhouse gas reduction strategies and climate change impacts and adaptation.

Appendix B - Financial Statements

Expenditure and Revenue figures included in this document are based on public information provided in the Report and the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for Fiscal Year Ended 31 March, 2016. It should be noted that these statements are unaudited.

		Estimates	
	Actual$	Amended$	Original$
Executive & Support Services			
Minister's Office	464,814	473,200	260,600
Executive Support	911,376	949,300	1,016,500
Revenue - Provincial	(189,760)	(169,000)	(169,000)
Administrative Support	258,641	314,200	350,300
Revenue - Provincial	(23,035)	0	0
Policy Development and Planning	772,628	901,400	901,400
Administrative Support - Capital	70,995	74,000	57,900
C A Pippy Park Commission	606,600	606,600	606,600
Total: Executive and Support Services	**2,872,259**	**3,149,700**	**3,024,300**
Environmental Management & Control			
Pollution Prevention	4,548,421	4,853,800	4,679,700
Revenue - Federal	(6,400)	(25,000)	(25,000)
Revenue - Provincial	(135,767)	(207,800)	(207,800)
Water Resources Management	3,746,199	4,320,800	4,287,800
Revenue - Federal	0	(30,000)	(30,000)
Revenue - Provincial	(645,183)	(886,700)	(886,700)
Water Quality Agreement	1,158,368	1,481,500	1,481,500
Revenue - Federal	(46,500)	(121,000)	(121,000)
Revenue - Provincial	(619,423)	(974,700)	(974,700)
Environmental Assessment and Sustainable Development	872,687	984,400	1,089,500
Revenue - Provincial	(101,636)	(302,000)	(302,000)
Total: Environment Management & Control	**8,770,766**	**9,093,300**	**8,991,300**

	Actual$	Estimates Amended$	Original$
Parks & Natural Areas			
Parks and Natural Areas	5,168,807	5,272,700	5,226,900
Revenue - Federal	0	(2,500)	(2,500)
Revenue - Provincial	(231)	(5,000)	(5,000)
Park Development	167,937	176,400	192,500
Total: Parks & Natural Areas	**5,336,513**	**5,441,600**	**5,411,900**
Wildlife			
Administration, Licensing and Operations	1,796,873	1,895,900	1,528,200
Endangered Species and Biodiversity	317,359	358,900	428,900
Stewardship and Education	1,125,605	1,176,900	1,256,900
Habitat, Game and Fur Management	1,541,334	1,636,900	2,080,000
Research	1,530,823	1,828,700	1,828,800
Cooperative Wildlife Projects	363,351	554,700	554,700
Revenue - Federal	(175,690)	(213,400)	(213,400)
Institute for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Science	271,127	305,000	305,000
Total: Wildlife	**6,770,782**	**7,543,600**	**7,769,100**
Total: Wildlife Parks and Natural Areas	**12,107,295**	**12,985,200**	**13,181,000**
TOTAL DEPARTMENT	**23,750,320**	**25,228,200**	**25,196,600**


Newfoundland
Labrador
Environment and Conservation
2015-16 Annual Report